

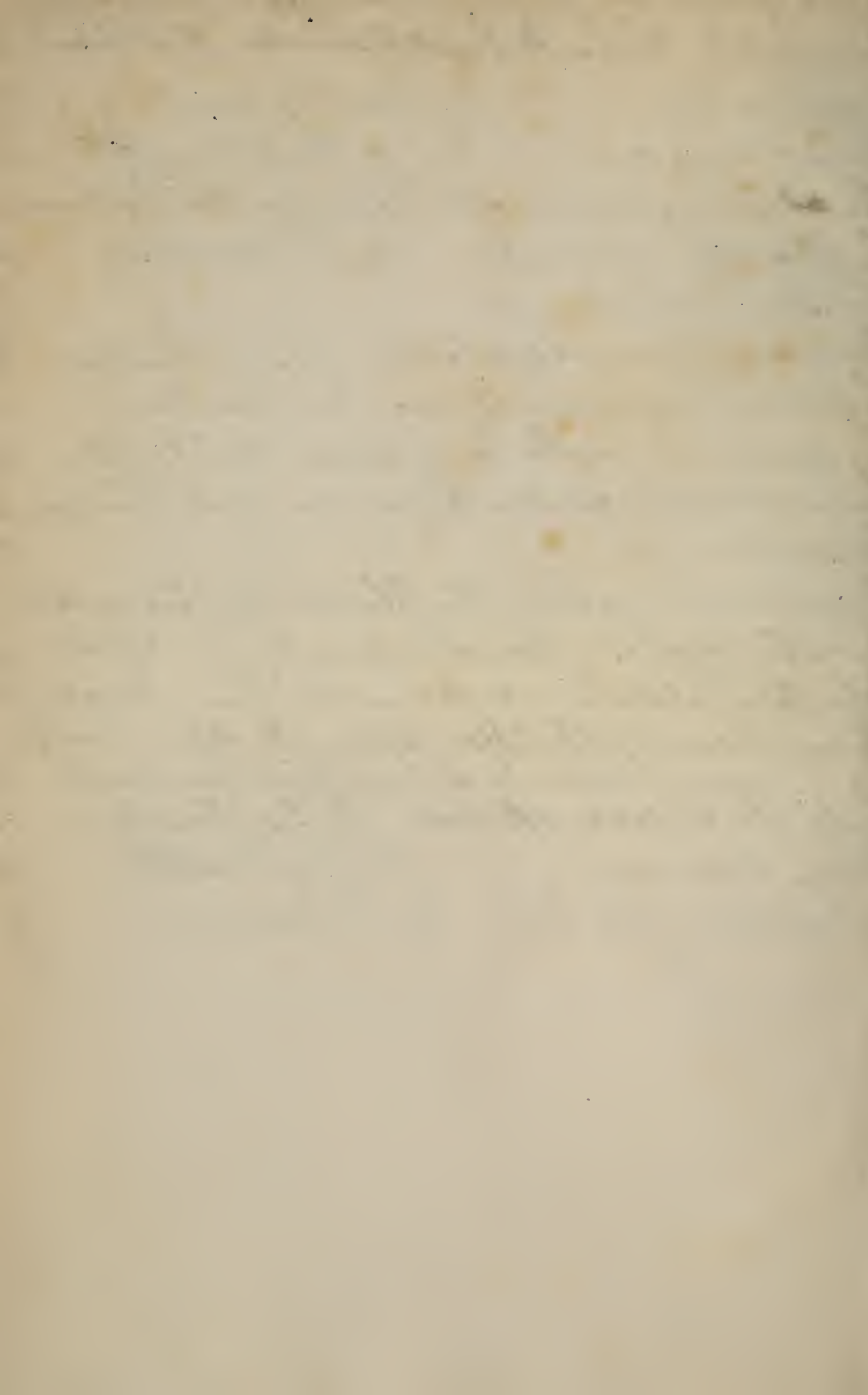




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UNIVERSITY OF ALBANY

LOSSES OF
SHIPS AND LIVES
ON THE
NORTH-EAST COAST
OF
ENGLAND,
AND
HOW TO PREVENT THEM.

BY
WILLIAM S. CORTIS, M.D.

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An explanation may appear necessary for the publication of this pamphlet. It is simply this, that although the author has no personal interest in the matter, a continuous absence of ten years has not obliterated from his memory the scenes he witnessed during a residence on the North-East Coast of nearly twenty years duration, nor diminished the interest he then took in endeavouring to procure the adoption of measures which should prevent their recurrence—scenes which *can be prevented*, and are therefore a disgrace to the country and its Government.

141, KENNINGTON PARK ROAD, S.E.

March 14th, 1871.

LOSSES OF SHIPS AND LIVES, &c., &c.

THE Winter of 1870-71 has already added its quota to the storms which have strewed the shores of that terrible North-East Coast with wrecks, and carried death and mourning into so many of its homes.

We cannot wonder that the painful story has stimulated the desire to bring the case once more before Parliament, in the hope of procuring the adoption of measures which shall prevent the recurrence of these most sad catastrophes.

A new House of Commons has been elected since the question of Harbours of Refuge was last discussed, and it may therefore be useful to give a brief resumé of the subject.

It will be remembered that the question received a thorough investigation at the hands of a Committee of the House of Commons, which sat during the two sessions 1857 and 1858, under the Chairmanship of the late Mr. James Wilson, then President of the Board of Trade.

This Committee reported that 850 lives, and property to the value of £1,500,000 to £2,000,000 were lost annually by shipwreck on the British Coasts, that a very considerable proportion of both—especially of the lives—would be saved by the establishment of Harbours of Refuge, and that the North-East Coast of England was the one more especially requiring immediate attention.

The Royal Commission which was appointed on the recommendation of this Committee to examine more minutely into details—and which in 1859 personally visited the Coasts and examined a host of competent witnesses—reported strongly and

unanimously on the necessity of establishing a Harbour of Refuge at Filey. The evidence taken before both these bodies established beyond the power of contradiction the well known facts of the case, viz: that fleets of loaded vessels leaving the coal ports bound south, get up as far as Flamborough Head, where, becoming baffled by the wind, they are unable to 'weather' the Head, and consequently congregate there in large numbers, often to the extent of many hundreds—not unfrequently of a thousand sail. In this position they are caught by a S.E. gale, and there being no port capable of entry during a storm, they are scattered along the Coast as far as the Firth of Forth, strewing the shores with wreck or foundering by the way, and in the latter case usually carrying all hands to the bottom. Those ships which have succeeded in reaching the shelter of the Forth—battered, damaged, and leaky, from their struggle with the storm, often with spars carried away and scarcely a rag of canvas left—still have their whole voyage before them, and after refitting, start again, too probably only to repeat the same process, so that it is by no means uncommon for a whole fleet to reach Flamborough Head, and be driven back again as often as three times in one voyage, losing many of their number, both ships and crews, each time. Captain after Captain testified to these facts which are notoriously common. Thus, Captain Clark, before the Committee, testifies that on one occasion he was one of a fleet of seven hundred (700) which left the coal ports, were *three times* driven back from the neighbourhood of Flamborough Head, and finally he did not reach the Thames till eight weeks after starting, although his ship was the second of the whole fleet to do so. On such occasions the absence of arrivals in the Thames causes coals to rise in price, often several shillings per ton, so that the inhabitants of the Metropolis—especially the poor man who

cannot lay in a large stock before hand—suffer not a little from this delay. Similar was the case of Captain Blackerston of the brig Annandale, of Shields. He sailed from Shields in company with a fleet of Colliers on February 5th, 1858, brought up in Filey Bay on the 7th, along with nearly 100 others; was driven by a S.E. gale to the Firth of Forth which he reached on the 11th; sailed again on the 14th, got as far as six or eight miles South of Flamborough Head and was again driven back to the Forth which he reached on the 24th, and where the ship and crew were detained for a long time, so that in the beginning of April they had only *got back to Shields*, with loss of anchor and chains, money paid for assistance in Leith Roads, with the whole of their voyage still before them, and therefore their loss of time, wear and tear, &c., fruitless, whilst several of their consorts, still more unfortunate, had been wrecked. So again Captain Sayers in December, 1852, brought up for shelter in Filey Bay with about 100 more vessels and a still larger number dodging on the North side of Flamborough Head. A S.E. gale coming on they were obliged to slip their anchors and run North. Several foundered with all hands; Captain Sayers describes how his sails were blown away; the bulwarks and everything on deck swept overboard; five feet of water in the hold; the crew exhausted with incessant labour at the pumps for *nine* days, during which they could have no fire. They saw two of their companion vessels founder but could render them no assistance. Ultimately they got into *Aberdeen, where also were driven about Sixty (60) others of the fleet.* Of the hundreds of Captains examined there was hardly one who could not speak to similar experiences, so that the loss of from 50 to 100 vessels and from 20 to 50 or 60 lives in a single day on this line of Coast, was shown to be a far too frequent occurrence.

Equally strong was the evidence that the formation of such a Harbour as was proposed at Filey would save the greater portion of these ships and lives, and would, indeed, deprive this most formidable, though comparatively short voyage, of its chief dangers, by providing a port of refuge where the ships could at any time enter with perfect safety—to resume their voyage without loss of time as soon as the storm was over.

Moved by the reports of the Committee and Commission, the House of Commons in 1860, notwithstanding the most strenuous opposition of Her Majesty's Government, passed, in a House of 320 members, the following resolution:—"In the opinion of this House it is the duty of Her Majesty's Government to adopt at the earliest possible period the necessary measures to carry into effect the recommendations of the Commissioners appointed in 1858 to inquire into the formation of Harbours of Refuge on the Coasts of Great Britain and Ireland."

One would have thought that this was surely sufficient to settle the question, and that nothing remained but that Her Majesty's Government should proceed to give effect to the measures so unanimously recommended after such long and exhaustive inquiries and deliberations. Instead of so doing, however, they evaded their responsibility, and the first step was to alter the annual returns of wrecks and casualties published by the Board of Trade, which would otherwise have disclosed facts supporting too distinctly the general opinion that a Harbour at Filey would cause so large a saving of life and property. To this purpose these returns were emasculated in the following manner:—In the returns the Coasts had, up to that time, been divided into separate districts, with the wrecks tabulated so as to show the districts on which each occurred.

Now so far as the North-East Coast was concerned, they altered this, and removed the principal wrecks occurring on that Coast from their usual and proper table, viz., the one assigned to the North-East Coast, and placed them in another table on a different page having no connection with this Coast, returning them simply as having occurred "at sea!" Why, where were they to occur? Where do shipwrecks occur but "at sea,"? Observe the effect of this on the returns immediately preceding the debate for which they were "prepared," viz., those for the year 1862. These returns were made to show that only nine (9) lives were lost on the North-East Coast during the year, all its principal wrecks being returned as having occurred simply "at sea," vide page 22. During that year five vessels and 81 lives at least are acknowledged to have been lost between Sunderland or Shields and the Thames, and altogether not less than 100 lives between the Fern Islands and the Thames. This length of Coast forms two districts meeting at Flamborough Head, under the shelter of which the proposed Harbour at Filey would be situated, and there is good reason to believe that it would have saved about 85 of these lives; but by the arrangement invented neither ships nor lives appear in the returns of either the one district or the other. Let us trace one of these ships, which we can positively identify, on her fatal voyage, and see whether there is any justification for this method of dealing with returns which ought to be above suspicion.

The Steamer "Lifeguard" left Shields on December 26th, 1862, and foundered the same night off Filey, with 52 souls on board, but you will look in vain for her name in the returns belonging to the North-East Coast! And yet the evidence that she did founder there is as complete as can be expected in a case where not a single survivor escaped.

The two steamers "Pioneer" and "Lifeguard" left the Tyne together on the 26th. Among the Captains Reports in the "Shipping Gazette" a few days later may be seen the Report of the Captain of the "Pioneer," stating that he last saw the "Lifeguard" that same night off Scarboro' during a terrific gale, that he had great difficulty in keeping the "Pioneer" afloat, and that he believes the "Lifeguard" foundered a little while after he passed her. He is corroborated by the report in the same paper of the Captain of another vessel, who observed the lights of the two steamers struggling with the gale as they crossed Filey Bay, and while those of one gradually passed away round Flamborough Head, those of the other suddenly disappeared, as though the vessel had foundered; whilst in further corroboration, on the Monday following a fishing smack picked up off Flamborough Head a box which was known to have been in the cabin of this unfortunate steamer, and her lifeboat was passed off Whitby the next day but one. There is sufficient proof then that she passed Scarborough but did not succeed in getting round Flamborough Head, and therefore her wreck is localised to these sixteen miles of coast, nine of which are occupied by Filey Bay. Nay, the Board of Trade *knew* that she was wrecked there, for in the wreck chart which accompanies these very returns may be observed just off Filey the symbol which indicates the total loss of a steamer, which symbol can only refer to the "Lifeguard," as no other steamer was known to have been totally lost on that coast during that year.

Can it be doubted that if there had been a Harbour at Filey, the Captain of this unfortunate vessel would have availed himself of it, and so have saved his ship, and the 52 lives entrusted to his care!

In the Returns of previous years vessels wrecked under

such circumstances are properly returned as "off Filey," but now, to support a special view of Her Majesty's Government the Returns were thus "manipulated." How such a proceeding can be justified is a point that does not appear to us to admit of a satisfactory explanation.

At the same time there was published for the same purpose, a document styled "A Memorandum on Harbours of Refuge, addressed by the Board of Trade to the Treasury," a tissue of inaccuracies which we fully exposed at the time.

We will quote one example : At that time there was still in the recollection of those interested in such matters a disastrous gale, the effects of which called louder than ever for the establishment of a Harbour of Refuge at Filey, and were a reproach to those who prevented it being made. The writer of the "Memorandum" had consequently to explain them away. On January 2nd, 1857, a fleet of laden vessels had left the coal ports with a tolerably fair wind, and reached the neighbourhood of Flamborough Head the next day, by which time the wind had gradually got round to the south, thus preventing the further progress of the vessels, and they were compelled to dodge about the Head until it might change, so as to allow them to proceed. The fair wind for them had been foul, of course, for the vessels in ballast bound north, a fleet of which had, as usual under such circumstances, sought shelter in Yarmouth Roads. As the wind became southerly on the 3rd, these had weighed and proceeded north, so that it happened that on the night of the 3rd the two fleets were in the neighbourhood of Flamborough Head. By this time the wind had increased to a gale ; soon after midnight it blew a hurricane getting round suddenly as far as east by south, from which point to east by north it continued to blow for the remainder of the day. Can it for an instant be doubted that

if a Harbour in Filey Bay, such as that recommended by the Commissioners, had then existed, the whole of the loaded fleet would have sought its shelter early in the gale, and that the light vessels would, one after another as they came round Flamborough Head, have joined them there? Instead of this they were scattered before the gale along the Coast, and 76 of these vessels, with 119 lives at least, were known to have been lost between this point and the Tyne. By a perfectly unjustifiable manipulation of the returns the compiler of the "Memorandum" simply strikes out 40 of these lives as not being cases to be saved by the Harbour, although it is well *known* that the greater part of the ships had to run right past its site, and could, and no doubt would, have run directly into it, and there is every reason to assume the same of their companions. *Of ten (10) of these vessels and 28 lives lost on that day the Government returns make not the slightest mention.* Their names and full particulars are given in the pamphlet which exposed these manipulations.

One of the vessels with 5 lives appears to have been accidentally omitted, and the final result is that whilst in reality one hundred and nineteen (119) lives are known to have been lost on this Coast on that one day—besides others "missing"—which might probably have been saved by this Harbour, the compiler by simply striking out 40, and omitting, without notice or remark, 33, reduces the number to 46, which, notwithstanding all his ingenuity he is compelled to admit, would have been saved had the proposed Harbour at Filey existed.

It must be borne in mind that this is but one day, typical of many. They recur year after year, and whether the lives lost on that one day which would have been saved by the Harbour be 46 as admitted at the Board of Trade, or 119 as shown by the stubborn evidence of facts; they are too many to be quietly permitted when they may so easily be prevented.

We say this day was one typical of many. We have records of one so far back as November 1st, 1740, when 9 vessels with two-thirds of their crews were lost in Filey Bay alone; the last occurred on February 10th, of the present year. During the interval, covered by these 130 years, how many thousands of gallant seamen, how many millions of the national wealth have been destroyed on this terrible piece of Coast!

If we take up the files of the "Shipping Gazette," we shall find the gale of last month (Feb. 1871) described almost word for word in similar language to that used for the one in Jan. 1857. First, we have the reports of the laden vessels leaving the various Coal ports. Then on February 10th, the reporter at Whitby says, "about a thousand (1000) vessels passed here yesterday, bound South with a N.W. Wind; it is now blowing a gale at S.E., with sleet." On the same day it is reported from Lowestoft that the vessels wind-bound from the South had gone North that morning. Again then, we have two fleets, one of loaded the other of light Colliers, caught about Flamborough Head by a S.E. gale. The laden vessels passing Whitby on the 9th with a fair wind, would be stopped by two a.m. on the 10th, at which time the wind had got to S.S.W. By five a.m. it was S.E., blowing a strong gale, and at noon still heavier from E.S.E. Then commenced the usual wild flight in search of shelter, ending too often in foundering by the way, or death in the very sight of home and friends, so that the Coast for a hundred miles was strewn with fragments of wreck and the bodies of drowned seamen. Many of the smaller vessels at once ran for Bridlington Bay, in the hope that the wind might continue veering towards the North, in which case Flamborough Head would afford them some shelter. Desperate indeed must the captains have felt their condition to be when they were driven to this step, the result of which was

the loss of about 20 vessels driven on shore, of whose crews about 40 were drowned. The others were saved either by the Rocket apparatus or by the two Life Boats stationed here, the crews of which appear to have done all that brave and skilful boatmen could. As fast as one set of men were exhausted in the strife with the storm others took their places, so that the entire crews of twelve vessels were saved, and portions of others—But at what a sacrifice! One of the Life Boats going on its errand of mercy was upset and six of its brave crew themselves shared the fate of those they hoped to rescue. At the inquest held on their bodies the verdict returned was that they “sacrificed their lives in attempting to save a shipwrecked crew.” Let that be the epitaph engraved on their tombstones! A nobler one cannot be found—what honour to have merited it, but what is to be said of the country and the “Statesmen” who throw away such lives? We may address our Chief Minister in language similar to that used by the Roman Emperor to Varus, “Give us back our heroes.” Thank God there are thousands such on that Coast ready at any time to succour the shipwrecked with equal bravery and devotion, but you have no right to call upon them for such terrible sacrifice. One argument used against us has been that these wrecks are of little consequence because the vessels are of small value and insured, while the lives will almost certainly be saved by the Lifeboats. See how fatal your reasoning has proved, how murderous its results! The description given by the reporter in the local paper of the scene immediately preceding the funeral, when he stood amid the bodies of the Life Boatmen and of the 22 strangers washed ashore, with a mother calling piteously on her “darling boy,” who but 19 years of age had left her full of life only two days before, is touching in the extreme. Would that Mr. Gladstone

had stood by her side! Surely the humanity of his nature would have overcome the political economist, and he would have determined that so far as he could prevent them—and he *can* prevent them—these scenes should cease.

The next point on the Coast is Filey itself. Here the fleet of fishing luggers and colliers running in, as at Bridlington for shelter under Filey Brigg, were “burnt off” and stood out to sea again with the exception of one vessel. In this case again the crew was saved by the Life Boat, the vessel herself being totally wrecked. The master of one of the luggers (Jenkinson of the “Monarch,”) reports having seen a brig and a schooner founder with all hands between Flamborough Head and Robin Hood’s Bay, and another large brig on her beam ends, with the crew calling to be taken off; but a heavy sea had stove his boat and washed away the oars, so that he could render no assistance, and they too perished.

Passing along the Coast northwards, from every point you get the same reports of vessels running back or foundering, or driven ashore. From Scarbro’, Robin Hood’s Bay, Whitby, Hartlepool, Staithes, the tale is still the same. The details are so numerous that we must refer anyone desirous of becoming fully acquainted with them to the columns of the *Shipping Gazette* of February 10th and subsequent days, but as we have given some particulars of what occurred at the south end of the district, we will also add a scene from its northern termination, and for this purpose will simply give an extract from the *Shipping Gazette* itself:—

SHIELDS, Feb. 11.—The storm of yestnesday will be long remembered in this locality. The appearance of the fragments of the various ships that were in existence yesterday tells a sad tale this morning on our iron-bound Coast.

* * * * *

Before dark last night the waves were breaking right aloft over the pier works with terrible fury, and, but for the valuable aid of the Lifeboats and the

Coast and Life Brigade, there is no doubt there would have been a still more appalling loss of life. The following is an account in detail of the various casualties already reported by telegraph:—

The first vessel that came to grief was the John Elliotson, which struck heavily on the sand, but ultimately escaped into the Harbour.

The Orinoco next struck, and went to pieces almost immediately, and her crew were saved by the Tynemouth Lifeboat.

The Cynthia and Ann, of Sunderland, next made her appearance bound to the south with a crew of seven persons, and drove on the rocks under the Spanish Battery, and her stores and wreck were soon strewed about the shore. Crew saved in a very gallant manner by the Tynemouth Lifeboat.

The next vessel that came to trouble was the Jabez, of Whitby, which vessel formerly belonged to the Tyne. This vessel was from hence to London, and had been caught in the gale off Flamborough Head, and had put back for shelter. It was about 2 p.m. when she crossed the bar, and then took place one of the most exciting scenes that possibly can be imagined, the Lifeboats amidst the shouts from the people gathered upon the beach and promontory made several ineffectual attempts to reach her, at the time the sea was pitching over her and drove her on to her broadside. The vessel, however, speedily righted herself, but, alas, another heavy sea struck her, and she heeled over to rise no more. Her masts then broke away by the deck, her hull separated, and almost instantaneously casks, clothes, bags, and pieces of furniture were seen floating from the wreck, and in less than 15 minutes the ship was broken up into fragments. On a portion of the wreck the spectators saw the forms of a man and a boy clinging to some deck planks. Further out a man and a boy were also seen lashed to a portion of the wreck, but nothing was seen of the other portion of the crew. The man and boy nearest to the shore were rescued by some men dashing into the water, and pulling them to the shore. The boy was conveyed to the Bath Hotel in a very exhausted condition, and the man was taken to the Brigade House, each of them receiving all proper attention. The part of the wreck on which the man and boy were lashed withstood the action of the sea for some time; but, alas, in a few minutes more the poor boy seemed done, his limbs fell loosely where they were not lashed, and he apparently had died from exhaustion. His companion in agony (the mate) was seen by those on shore to place his arm round the boy, to keep him up, but it was all unavailing. Then came three heavy seas, and the mate was buried beneath the raging surf. The Jabez, with a crew of six hands, left here on Thursday for London.

* * * * *

Between and including the two points on which we have more particularly dwelt, about 80 lives were sacrificed on that one day. If we add the 13 lost in Filey Bay about three weeks previously and some others, we have a total of *more than 100 lives lost on this district of Coast during the two months of January and February alone*, and we are not acquainted with the particulars of any one case which the Harbour at Filey might not have prevented.

Mr. Milner Gibson, the persistent opponent of the measure we advocate, is fortunately removed from the Board of Trade, and we trust that Mr. Gladstone, being no longer swayed by his advice, will listen to the opinions of those men who are practically acquainted with the subject, and who are unanimous in urging the establishment of this Harbour. It was formerly urged upon these two gentlemen that they undertook a fearful responsibility in preventing this, and now upon them personally are charged the deaths of these drowned sailors, and bitter reproaches on their names are mingled with the wails of those whom their action has made widows and orphans. To bring home the responsibility in this direct manner may be considered objectionable, but why should it be? If the doctor by any neglect causes a single individual to lose his life he may be brought under the Coroner's inquisition. How much more should the statesman answer personally for his action which in a single day causes eighty deaths or thereabout; and especially for persistence in such action, which has caused, and will continue to cause, the deaths of hundreds?

We would again remind Mr. Gladstone of this frightful responsibility. Upon him mainly it rests to permit or forbid the creation of this Refuge Harbour. If he forbids it he dooms hundreds of our sailors to certain destruction. We would appeal to him in the name of humanity to elect to be

the preserver of these men, not their destroyer—to have the blessings of their wives and children, not the maledictions of their widows and orphans.

One word as to the comparative advantages of Filey. After the great losses which occurred in the Bay of Bridlington on February 10th we cannot be surprised at the inhabitants of that town petitioning Parliament for the formation of a Harbour on that Coast and drawing attention specially to their own Bay. We need not do more than allude to this subject, as Her Majesty's Commissioners so thoroughly examined the claims of the various possible sites, suffice it to say that one fatal objection is its position—the *south* side of Flamborough Head. Were there ever so good a Harbour at Bridlington, the great majority of the vessels would still be wrecked simply because they could not reach it. The shelter is chiefly wanted for laden colliers in S.E. gales, and in a S.E. gale a laden collier, if she be not already to the southward of Flamborough Head—and the bulk of them are caught north of that point—cannot reach Bridlington Bay. For instance, of what use would a Harbour there have been to the “Life-guard,” whose case we have quoted. She was struggling for hours off Filey trying in vain to get round Flamborough Head, and if this was the case with a steamer, how much more must it be with a sailing vessel? We ourselves have over and over again seen numbers of screw colliers sheltered in Filey Bay under Speeton Cliffs unable to work round Flamborough Head against a southerly wind blowing only half a gale. On this point Admiral Sir James Clark Ross, the Arctic navigator, in his evidence before the Committee of the House of Commons, forcibly corroborated the evidence of the merchant captains. He stated that he had often seen large fleets of colliers off Flamborough Head unable to work to the southward, and on

his return from his last voyage he, in command of two frigates, was in company with about 400 colliers, in this position for four days, during which he was unable to work Her Majesty's frigates round the Head, and, as he asked the committee, "Can you then be surprised that these colliers are unable to do what Her Majesty's ships could not accomplish?" On the other hand, in these gales, a vessel caught anywhere between Whitby and the Humber—and this is just where they *are* caught—could, with few exceptions, reach Filey. A Harbour at Bridlington might have saved those lives lost there on February 10th, but would have been useless to those lost to the north, whereas a Harbour at Filey would have saved *all*.

The local disadvantages of Bridlington are also great: thus whilst it already offers good shelter against a northerly gale, it never could afford much protection against one from the East. There is no stone at or near Bridlington Bay, the nearest cliff—at Flamborough Head—being nothing but soft chalk, whilst the nearest stone is *at Filey*, where there certainly is abundance, well fitted for the purpose, (vide report of Mr. Coode, C.E., made 1858), which of course could be readily used in Filey Bay, but would be most expensive to transport to Bridlington, as was once attempted for the improvement of the harbour works there, but the attempt had to be abandoned. *Could* a Breakwater be built on the Smithwick Sand—and as this is a quicksand it could only be at an enormous expense—the space enclosed would be comparatively limited in extent and shallow in depth, whilst the access would be most difficult. If a ship tried for the southern entrance she would have to pass through a very considerable extent of shoal, broken water, to the imminent danger of foundering, whilst if she tried for the northern entrance she would be to leeward of the harbour and probably go ashore

under the Flamborough Cliffs, especially as a very strong current runs out here for about nine hours out of the twelve, and this out-set could not fail to be increased were the bay enclosed by a Breakwater.

The report of Her Majesty's Commissioners fully confirms these views—we quote an extract:—

“ It is necessary to take some notice of Bridlington, which
 “ place we visited, though without the limits of our inquiry,
 “ for the reasons we have previously given ; and in respect of
 “ the claims advanced for the construction of a harbour in
 “ that locality, it will be sufficient to observe that it is little, if
 “ at all, required ; inasmuch as vessels from the north that can
 “ weather Flamborough Head rarely fail to reach the Humber,
 “ and those bound north, if unable to get round the head, can
 “ find excellent shelter in the bay as it is, for which pupose it
 “ is largely resorted to.”

“ Various plans having been proposed at different periods
 “ for Breakwaters on the Smithwick Bank, we may observe, that
 “ their construction would in all probability be attended with
 “ serious difficulties, and that the proportional expense of con-
 “ struction would be very great from the entire absence of
 “ material in the immediate locality. The deep water anchor-
 “ age, which is situated in the north-eastern portion of the bay,
 “ would be but little, if at all, improved in point of shelter,
 “ and the remainder only for the period between half-tide and
 “ high water, when in heavy easterly gales, a considerable sea
 comes in over the bank.”—(Report of Royal Commission on
 Harbours of Refuge, p. 20.)

On the other hand, as the evidencee quite satisfied the Commissioners, the Harbour at Filey, besides being situated just where it is wanted, would be ample in extent and depth, could be easily entered at any state of wind and tide, whilst, from

its local advantages, it could be constructed at a minimum amount of cost.

Although we have treated this matter chiefly with reference to the necessities of Colliers, we must not forget the other important advantages this Harbour would give. Vessels trading between Scotch ports and the Thames would share its benefits, and especially would it be useful to the very important class employed in the Baltic and North German trades. Flamborough Head is the landfall for all ships bound from the Baltic to Hull and the various ports as far South as Lynn. The importance of this trade may be estimated from the fact that in the year 1869 the ships entering the port of Hull alone from the Baltic, amounted to 1,300,000 tons, and their values with their cargoes, according to the Custom House valuation, to £6,000,000. Lynn also has a large trade with the Baltic, and both from Hull and Lynn did a number of highly intelligent captains unanimously give most interesting and conclusive evidence as to the value they would attach to a Harbour at Filey. For details we must refer to the Blue Books containing the evidence taken by the Committee and especially to that given at Hull to Her Majesty's Commissioners. *Filey is the ONLY POINT ON THE COAST where a Harbour could be made to be of any service whatever to these trades.*

Having mentioned the fishing yawls, we may state incidentally that their crews on these occasions share in, and suffer from, the dangers of the colliers. When caught in one of these easterly gales, as they so frequently are, while pursuing their avocations, they often are compelled to weather it out at sea, for along the whole of this Coast there is not a single Harbour which even a fishing boat can take with safety in a heavy gale from the eastward. Bridlington, Scarbro', Whitby, are all mere tidal Harbours, little better than wreck

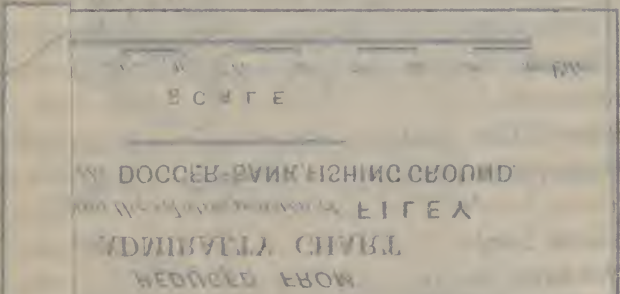
traps in their present condition and incapable of much improvement. If the fishermen should run for them, their friends on shore, as at Filey in this instance, constantly have to light large fires as signals that they cannot enter. A similar description applies to the mouth of the Tees and Hartlepool, and though some improvement has been effected at the mouth of the Tyne by the expenditure of many hundreds of thousands of pounds, its effect in such heavy gales as that of February 10th was shown by so many vessels finding it a source of peril rather than of safety, whilst its position so far north is an additional defect, especially so far as fishing craft are concerned.

At certain seasons of the year there are as many as 20,000 men and boys employed in the fisheries off this coast, and the value of the fish caught is not less than two millions of pounds sterling (£2,000,000) annually. The Commissioners on Sea Fisheries report that notwithstanding the great amount of fish caught, this fishing ground "is to a great extent unworked." One chief reason of this is the want of a harbour for the Boats, and as Filey is exactly opposite the centre of the fishing ground it would be of incalculable advantage to the fishermen, and increase immensely the amount of fish caught, and this being sent largely to London, as well as to the Manufacturing Towns, we again see how the interests of the resident in Town accords with that of the sailor in this question. This is not the place to enter fully into this matter. especially as we have proved it elsewhere, but without doubt the establishment of this harbour at Filey, would largely increase the supply of fish to the London Market, and *pro tanto*, diminish its price.

We have thus far confined our remarks to the advantages which Filey Bay possesses as a site for a Harbour of Refuge for our Mercantile Marine; we now turn to the question of its advantages as a rendezvous or station for Her Majesty's

" Of the right's fishing, could not have
 " Found equal in weight to that of so small
 " A fishery, in a single right's fishing,
 " Of food to the benevolent population
 " Of the coast. The same area at the bottom
 " Of the year in view of food land, certainly
 " Fishing grounds are much more fruitful
 " In a far higher proportion to that of

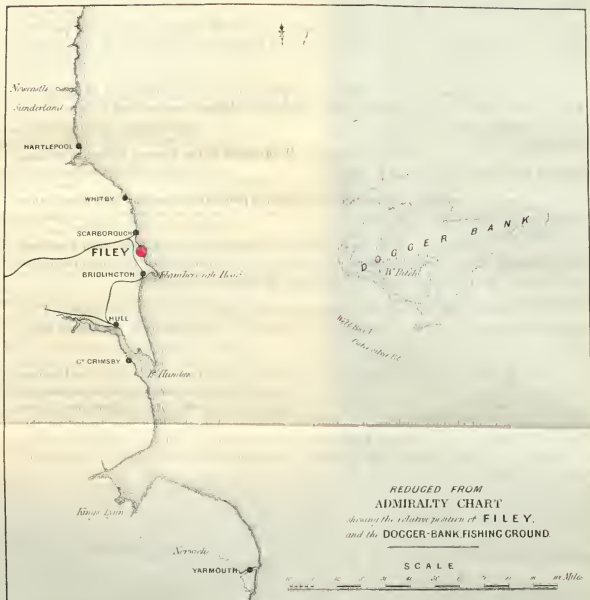
" Of the United Kingdom "
 " For profitable enterprise is open for
 " The increasing scarcity and high price of
 " Food to this country has become a
 " Day is situated : more especially at the
 " Of, shows the vast importance of the
 " The importance of the Sea Fisheries of the



Coast, would yield (with the Boats) in F
 than £30,000, whilst the annual increase
 to £2,000 yearly

FILEY FISHERY HARBOUR.

(TO ACCOMPANY PROSPECTUS.)



The following Extracts from the report of the Royal Commissioners on the Sea Fisheries of the United Kingdom, just now issued, (January, 1866), shows the vast importance of the Fisheries in the part of the North Sea, on which Filey is situated ; more especially at the present crisis, when the question of the supply of Food to this Country has become a matter of such overwhelming importance.

"The evidence we have taken, coupled with the increasing scarcity and high price of "butchers' meat, leaves no doubt in our minds that a great field for profitable enterprise is open for "the application of increased capital and skill to the sea fisheries of the United Kingdom."

"The produce of the sea around our coasts bears a far higher proportion to that of "the land than is generally imagined. The most frequented fishing grounds are much more prolific "of food than the same extent of the richest land. Once in the year an acre of good land, carefully "tilled, produces a ton of corn, or two or three cwt. of meat or cheese. The same area at the bottom "of the sea on the best fishing grounds yields a greater weight of food to the persevering fisherman "every week in the year. Five vessels belonging to the same owner, in a single night's fishing, "brought in 17 tons weight of fish, an amount of wholesome food equal in weight to that of 50 cattle "or 300 sheep. The ground which these vessels covered during the night's fishing, could not have "exceeded an area of 50 acres."

"When we consider the amount of care that has been bestowed on the improvement of agriculture, the national societies which are established for promoting it, and the scientific knowledge and engineering skill which have been enlisted in its aid, it seems strange that the sea fisheries have hitherto attracted so little of the public attention. There are few means of enterprise that present better chances of profit than our sea fisheries."

"The well known fishing grounds in the North Sea are, even yet, only partially fished. The Dogger Bank, which has an area of several hundred square miles, and is most prolific of fish, is to a great extent unworked."

"It is particularly interesting as bearing upon the alleged falling off in the take of fish on the eastern coast of England, where, instead of a decline, there is shown to be an annual increase exceeding 10,000 tons."

The above relates to the White Fisheries. With regard to the Herring Fisheries the Commissioners say:—

"The weight of herrings annually caught is probably greater than that of all other sea fish together."

"At Scarborough during the past three years there seems to have been a marked and progressive increase. So plentiful are the herrings there, sometimes, that 700, to 800 tons are said to be sent thence into the interior of the country by railway in a single day."

The skeleton Chart annexed shows the advantageous position of the site of the proposed Filey Fishery Harbour, for "working" more effectually the prolific Fishing Grounds on the Dogger Bank.

From the report of the Commissioners it appears that 100,000 tons of Fish, other than Herrings and Sprats, are annually landed on the line of Coast shown on the Chart, and that this is increasing at the rate of 10,000 tons per annum. Adding the Herrings to this quantity, it is evident that at the very moderate scale of charges authorised by the Filey Harbour Act, the Fish now landed on this Coast, would yield (with the Boats) in Harbour dues to the existing Ports a yearly revenue of not less than £30,000, whilst the annual increase will give a corresponding additional revenue of from £1,500 to £2,000 yearly

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very moder

vessels during the time of war. This is a point which has recently assumed a momentous importance, and it is one which the Government cannot, in our opinion, treat otherwise than very seriously. The whole of the East Coast of England, and especially that portion of it which lies between the Tyne and the Humber, and which is the focus of the seaborne commerce, both as regards the Coasting and the Baltic trades, is now without a single Harbour adapted even for a small squadron of observation. Filey Bay—and it may with truth be asserted, Filey Bay *alone*—possesses *all* the requisite features and natural advantages for the construction of such a Harbour. For proof of this we appeal with confidence to the evidence given before the Committee of the House of Commons, to the report of Mr. Coode, C.E., made in January, 1858, to the evidence given before the Royal Commission in 1858-59, and to the Report of that Commission from whom the subject received the most patient and searching investigation.

The political events which have occurred within the last few months, and the aspect of the political horizon at this time, cannot fail to warn the most apathetic of our responsible rulers that it is high time for them to deal with this matter.

With Russia and Prussia growing into most powerful maritime Empires, and increasing their fleets, which may at any moment be allied against this kingdom—that of Russia being already very formidable—a naval rendezvous for watching the Baltic and protecting our own Coasts and Commerce against hostile squadrons operating from that sea appears to be an imperative necessity for the British Fleet.

A Harbour in Filey Bay, the most salient point of the Coast, would give such a rendezvous large enough to accommodate the Channel Fleet.

The *highest* estimate of the cost of such a Harbour here is £860,000, which sum would of course be spread over several

years. The Harbour would begin to be available for refuge at an early stage of its construction, and before completion would have recouped the nation by the amount of salvage effected. But even this cost, so small compared with the object, could we imagine be very largely reduced by the employment of convict labour on the works. We have reason to believe that the attention of the Directors of convicts has already been turned to this point, in consequence of the necessity which, we understand, has arisen for providing labour for the increasing number of prisoners in our home establishments, the work requiring to be done at Filey being well adapted for that purpose.

We do not know how far we may be right in our assumption, but we should imagine that the recent completion of the Breakwater at Portland will render this necessity even more urgent than it has been, and we should also suppose that much of the working plant from that place would be available for use at Filey. Why should not Filey be made to bear the same relation to the North Sea that Portland does to the English Channel?

To sum up—we think we have shown that there is every ground for this subject being now taken up by Parliament. The need is greater than ever, for the recent loss of life has been of such a fearful character, that it has made a profound impression along the eastern seaboard of the kingdom. The political events of the last few months have shown the necessity for putting our coasts into a state of defence, and there is a growing need for providing employment for many of our convicts. Why then delay?

It is for the House of Commons to decide the question, and we feel every confidence that the members will do so on *this* occasion in such a manner as will leave no room for the Executive *again* to set at naught the distinct Resolution of the House.

The Imports of Coal per annum. Those into other British Ports 300 vessels. It was stated before require a Harbour of Refuge once in twelve years : but taking it at only half, 5,000,000 and the observations of sea-faring men residing in Colliers, averaging 200 tons each, might be

The usual charge for wharfrage is 2s. 6d. They by the intended arrangements : viz. :—Station, whilst large quantities are wanted for

It was smaller
Harbour the Enterprise
but cannot be raised

At Hull, from less than £13 per boat, and

It was proposed to construct a smaller harbour in Filey Bay by private enterprise but sufficient funds could not be raised

DATA

ILLUSTRATING THE PROBABLE REVENUE

OF THE

FILEY FISHERY HARBOUR.

THE CAPITAL EMPLOYED IN THE FISHERY BUSINESS AT THREE PORTS ONLY.

Amounts to £1,500,000, viz.,

At Yarmouth	£475,000
At Hull	£300,000
At Grimsby	£725,000
	£1,500,000

At Hull it was given in evidence last year, before the Fishery Commissioners, that in the previous three years £300,000 had been invested in Fishing Smacks in that Port alone.

THE ANNUAL VALUE OF THE PRODUCE OF THE FISHERIES ON THE NORTH EAST COAST

AMOUNTS TO ABOVE £20,000,000. See Report of Fisheries Commission, 1866

VESSELS ENGAGED IN WHITE FISHERY ON AND ABOUT THE DOGGER BANK.

From the Humber there sail, SMACKS, trawling all the year, about	150
From Filey, Scarborough, Whitby, and Staithes, LOGGERS, fishing with lines, about	150
Say	300
Trawling Smacks and Loggers belonging to the Norfolk and Southern Ports, about	700
	1,300

The Smacks trawl all the year round. The Loggers leave the White Fishing, and are engaged in Fishing for Herrings during the season for the latter.

The average catch per week of these Vessels is $1\frac{1}{2}$ tons each. Supposing only about 600 of them to deliver their Fish at Filey, it will amount to not less than 900 tons per week.

ESTIMATED REVENUE FROM THE WHITE FISHERY.

The usual charge for landing is about 3s. 6d. per ton; but, taking it at only 2s. 6d., we have a Revenue	
from the 900 tons of fish delivered of £112 10s. per week, or per annum	£5,850
The charge per annum on Boats using the Harbour will be about £2 10s., but taking it at £2 on 600 Boats	£1,200
Say	£7,050

(This is an Average of £10 per Boat.)

At Hull, from less than 300 Boats, the Dock Dues received amount to £4,000 per annum, or more than £13 per boat, and at Grimsby the proportion is quite as much.

REVENUE FROM VESSELS ENGAGED IN HERRING FISHERY ON AND AROUND THE HOGGERS BANK, AND COAST OF YORKSHIRE.

From Various information, it is estimated that the number of Herrings delivered at Filey would reach 20,000 Lasts. This quantity would represent the total catch of 400 Luggers, on which the charge, at 3s. per season, would amount to	1,000
At 2s. 6d. per Last for Landing, the fish would yield	£2,500
	£3,500
At Filey, the catch of 25 Luggers averages above 60 lasts of Herrings each	1,500
25 Cuddes average 20 lasts each	500
	2,000
	Lasts

Being an average of 40 for each craft

At this average, (which is below the reality,) 20,000 Lasts will represent the catch of 500 Craft. The usual charge for wharfrage is 2s. 6d., as above; but there are other charges elsewhere which would be saved at Filey by the intended arrangements; viz. —at Scarborough it costs 3s. per Last discharging, and 6s. cartage to the Railway Station, whilst large quantities are carted from Scarborough to Filey (for curing) at an expense of £1 per last.

ESTIMATE OF REVENUE FROM VESSELS SEEKING REFUGE

The Imports of Coal into London from the North Eastern Ports by sea are about 3,000,000 tons per annum. Those into other British Ports will bring the quantity up to more than 5,000,000 tons, passing Filey in 25,000 vessels.

It was stated before the Parliamentary Committee on Harbours of Refuge, that loaded Colliers require a Harbour of Refuge once in twelve voyages. For the greater number of these Filey would be the most suitable locality; but taking it at only half, 5,000,000 divided by 24, gives in round numbers 200,000 tons; other calculations and the observations of sea-faring men residing on the coast, arrive at a similar conclusion, viz. —that not less than 1,000 loaded Colliers, averaging 200 tons each, might be expected to take refuge in this Harbour annually.

A charge of fourpence per ton on these vessels would leave a revenue of £3,300 per annum.

The number of Colliers in ballast seeking refuge would be about one-fourth that of the laden vessels; and at three pence per ton would yield £600, making a total of £3,900, to which would be added dues from other vessels—as traders from the Baltic to Hull, Lynn, London and other Ports—for which, especially in the autumn, Flamborough-Head is the landfall.

In addition to the foregoing, about 3,000,000 tons of Coal are annually exported abroad from the North Eastern Ports, a very large proportion of which, including all bound to France, the Mediterranean, and other Southern destinations, not less, but probably considerably more, than two-thirds of the whole, or 2,000,000 tons, will also pass Filey.

There is, therefore, good reason for believing that the estimated Revenue of £3,000 under this head, may be considerably exceeded.

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